

Message Text

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ACTION EB-11

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7472

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRIDGETOWN 1223

E.O. 11652: DECLASSIFY AFTER DECEMBER 31, 1975

TAGS: ETRN BB

SUBJ: CIVAIR: GRENADA MAY SEEK U.S.-GRENADA FLIGHTS

REF: BTN 1179

1. ACCORDING TO COURT LINE REP HARRY MOFFETT, GRENADA PM ERIC GAIRY, CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE IMPACT OF LIAT'S UNCERTAIN SITUATION ON GRENADA'S TOURISM, WISHES TO ARRANGE FOR DIRECT FLIGHT (POSSIBLY ON LEASE BASIS) FROM U.S. TO GRENADA. MOFFETT SAID THAT HE MET PERSONALLY WITH GAIRY ON OR ABOUT JULY 7 AND THAT GAIRY EXPRESSED EXTREME CONCERN OVER FACT THAT TOUR AND CHARTER OPERATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA WERE SIMPLY NOT SELLING GRENADA BOOKINGS BECAUSE OF LIAT'S UNCERTAIN FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SITUATION. GAIRY TOLD MOFFETT THAT SOME LARGE TOUR ORGANIZATIONS (SUNTOUR, SKYLARK, FIESTA) WERE FEARFUL THAT CANCELLED LIAT SCHEDULES FROM BARBADOS TO GRENADA COULD RESULT IN THEIR HAVING TO OVERNIGHT TOUR GROUPS IN BARBADOS, A DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD CUT DEEPLY INTO PROFITS. RESULT, ACCORDING TO GAIRY, WAS THAT NO ONE WAS SELLING GRENADA AND THAT 1975-76 SEASON COULD BE DISASTROUS. GAIRY TOLD MOFFETT HE WAS SEEKING WAY TO FLY TOURISTS DIRECTLY TO GRENADA FROM U.S., POSSIBLY FROM NEW YORK.

2. MOFFETT TOLD GAIRY THAT HE WOULD BE BETTER OFF IF HE COULD MAKE LEASING ARRANGEMENTS WITH PAA OR EAL TO FLY NON-STOP SAN JUAN-GRENADA, POSSIBLY THROUGH 100 PERCENT GOG-OWNED

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GRENADA CORPORATION. GAIRY SAID HE WOULD LOOK INTO MATTER

AND WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH MOFFETT.

3. ACCORDING TO MOFFETT, LIAT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY RELUCTANT TO HANDLE GRENADA ROUTE AND TOUR OPERATORS DO NOT WISH TO DEAL WITH AIR CALYPSO BECAUSE OF LATTER'S PRECARIOUS DEBT SITUATION. MOFFETT SAID HE DID HIS BEST TO DISSUADE GAIRY FROM ATTEMPTING TO ESTABLISH LEASING ARRANGEMENT ON NEW YORK ROUTE, PUSHING HIM INSTEAD TO FINANCIALLY SAFER (MOFFETT CLAIMS) SAN JUAN ROUTE.

4. COMMENT: INTERRUPTION OF LIAT SERVICE WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT UPON GRENADA'S TOURIST ECONOMY. IF LEASE ARRANGEMENTS SUGGESTED BY MOFFETT ARE LEGALLY POSSIBLE AND FINANCIALLY VIABLE, PERHAPS THEY WOULD MAKE SENSE FOR GOG. WE UNDERSTAND GAIRY IS CURRENTLY LOOKING FOR CIVIL AVIATION DIRECTOR AND HAS SOUNDED OUT FORMER GOB CIVAIR DIRECTOR TED WENT.
DONOVAN

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